

DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker: Heat and energy use in the home, Spring 2024, UK

03 July 2024

Official Statistics

The DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker is a nationally representative annual survey of adults (aged 16+) in the UK that tracks public awareness, attitudes and behaviours relating to the policies of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), such as energy and climate change.

This report provides a summary of the headline findings relating to heat and energy use in the home from the Spring 2024 wave of the Tracker, which ran from 18 March to 22 April 2024.

Differences between groups are only reported where they are statistically significant at the 95% confidence interval level.

Two summary self-reported measures are used in this report:

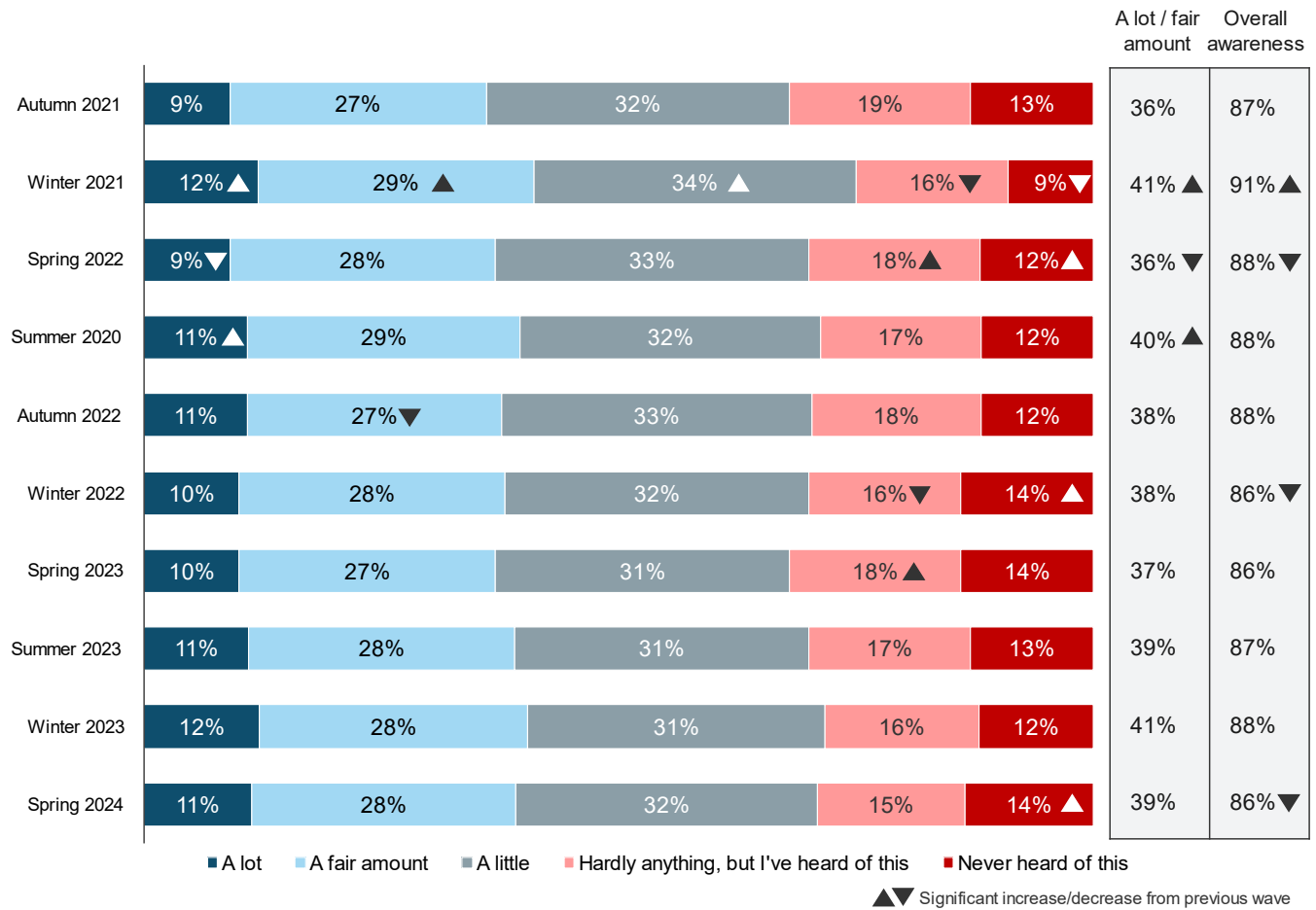
- **'Awareness'** encompasses all respondents who said they had heard of a particular concept or technology, including those who said 'hardly anything but I've heard of this', 'a little', 'a fair amount' or 'a lot'.
- **'Knowledge'** encompasses those who said that they know 'a fair amount' or 'a lot'.

Awareness of heating changes to meet Net Zero targets

Respondents were presented with the following explanation: *'In the lead up to 2050, the way we heat almost all of our homes and buildings will need to change in order to reach the UK government's Net Zero target'*.

In Spring 2024, after reading this explanation, 86% of people said they were aware of the need to change the way homes and buildings are heated in order to reach the Net Zero target. Awareness had fallen from 88% when last asked in Winter 2023 and has now returned to the lowest level seen since tracking began in Autumn 2021 (Figure 4.1). Knowledge levels, however, have remained more stable over time, with 39% saying they knew 'a lot' or 'a fair amount'. As in previous waves, around one in ten said they knew a lot (11%), and around half (47%) said that they knew a little (32%) or hardly anything (15%) about this.

Figure 4.1: Awareness of the need to change the way homes are heated to reach Net Zero targets in 2050 (based on all people), Autumn 2021 to Spring 2024



HEATHOMEKNOW. In the lead up to 2050, the way we heat almost all of our homes and buildings will need to change in order to reach the UK government’s Net Zero target. Before today, how much if anything did you know about this?

Base: All wave respondents – Autumn 2021 (5,552), Winter 2021 (3,705), Spring 2022 (4,374), Summer 2022 (4,489), Autumn 2022 (4,160), Winter 2022 (3,572), Spring 2023 (4,406), Summer 2023 (3,998), Winter 2023 (3,741), Spring 2024 (4,083) (Asked each wave)

By age, knowledge about net zero heating changes (knowing ‘a lot’ or ‘a fair amount’) was highest among those aged 55 and over (from 43% to 48% by age band) and lowest for those aged under 35 (from 30% to 32%).

Awareness of Net Zero heating changes was highest for those that claimed to know at least ‘a fair amount’ about the concept of Net Zero (98%) compared to those that claimed to know hardly anything / a little (84%) and those not aware (24%). Knowledge of Net Zero heating changes followed a similar pattern (68%, 8% and 1% respectively).

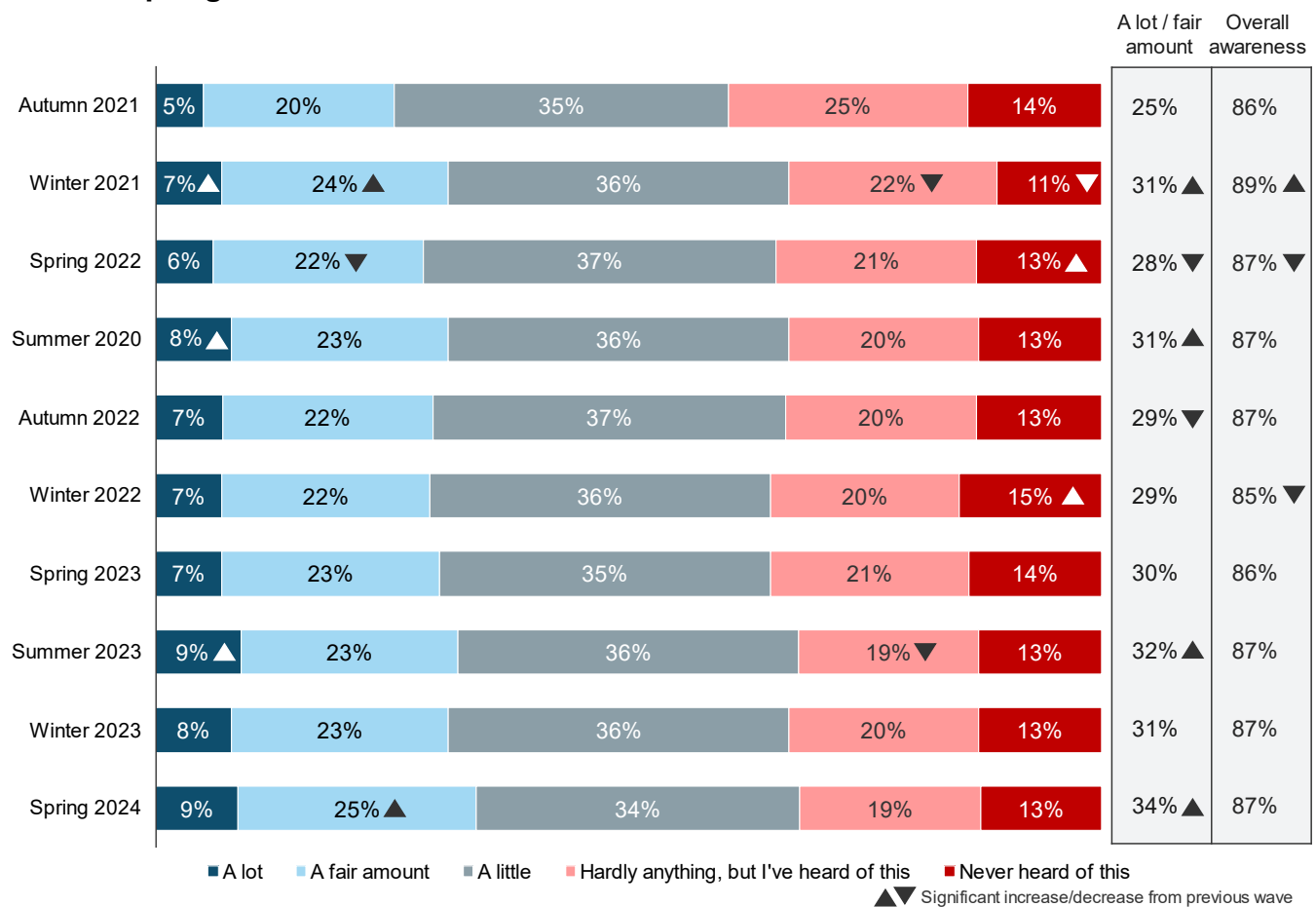
People living in owner-occupier households (45%) were more likely to say they knew ‘a lot’ or ‘a fair amount’ than those in privately rented households (33%), and social rented households (25%).

Awareness of low-carbon heating systems

Low-carbon heating systems were first described to respondents in general terms as ‘...environmentally friendly heating systems which no longer rely on conventional gas central heating but instead use energy from low-carbon alternatives such as hydrogen, the sun, or heat pumps which draw heat from the ground, air or water to heat homes’.

After reading this explanation, in Spring 2024 a stable 87% of people said they were aware of low-carbon heating systems, while the proportion saying they knew ‘a lot’ or ‘a fair amount’ had increased (34% up from 31% in Winter 2023), the highest level recorded to date (Figure 4.2). There was no further increase, however, in the proportion saying they knew ‘a lot’ (9%).

Figure 4.2: Awareness of low-carbon heating systems (based on all people), Autumn 2021 to Spring 2024



LOWCARBKNOW. The next question is about low-carbon heating systems. By this we mean environmentally friendly heating systems which no longer rely on conventional gas central heating but instead use energy from low-carbon alternatives such as hydrogen, the sun, or heat pumps which draw heat from the ground, air or water to heat your home. Before today, how much if anything did you know about low-carbon heating systems?

Base: All wave respondents – Autumn 2021 (5,552), Winter 2021 (3,702), Spring 2022 (4,376), Summer 2022 (4,488), Autumn 2022 (4,161), Winter 2022 (3,573), Spring 2023 (4,404), Summer 2023 (4,000), Winter 2023 (3,743), Spring 2024 (4,085) (Asked each wave)

Self-reported knowledge (knowing ‘a lot’ or ‘a fair amount’) about low-carbon heating systems was highest for those aged 55 and over (from 38% to 41% by age band) and lowest for those aged under 35 (22% to 28%).

Those that reported knowing ‘a lot’ or ‘a fair amount’ about **net zero heating changes** were also more likely to report knowledge of **low-carbon heating systems** (72% of those that knew ‘a lot’ or ‘a fair amount’ about net zero heating changes also reported knowing ‘a lot’ or ‘a fair amount’ about low-carbon heating, compared to 4% of those who were unaware of net zero heating changes).

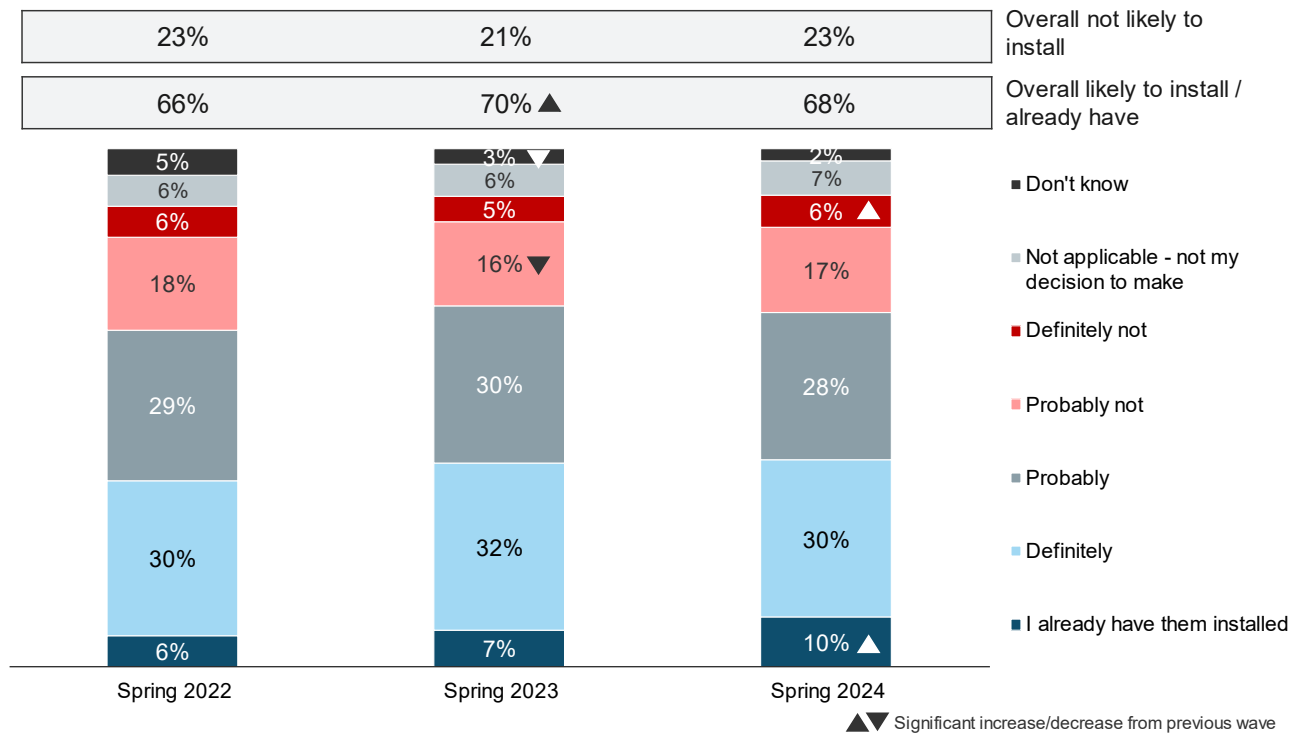
By tenure, people living in owner-occupier households (38%) were more likely to say they knew ‘a lot’ or ‘a fair amount’ than those in privately rented households (31%), and social rented households (23%).

Attitudes towards solar panels in the home

Respondents were asked whether they were likely to install solar panels in their home in the next few years. As a large proportion of people who rented their home said that this question was not applicable to them (29%), the results are based only on people living in owner-occupied homes.

In Spring 2024, 68% of owner-occupiers said they would probably or definitely install solar panels or had already done so, with no significant change since Spring 2023 (Figure 4.3). This is made up of 10% (up from 7% in Spring 2023) who said they already had solar panels installed, and 59% who said they are considering this. A stable 23% said they would probably or definitely not install solar panels.

Figure 4.3: Likelihood to consider installing solar panels in the home to generate electricity (based on all owner occupiers) Spring 2022, Spring 2023, Spring 2024



SOLARHOME. Would you consider having solar panels installed in your current home to generate electricity, in the next few years?

Base: All Owner-occupiers - Spring 2022 (3,285), Spring 2023 (3,239), Spring 2024 (3,175)

Among owner-occupiers, the likelihood of installing solar panels was highest for those aged 25 to 44 (72-75%) and lowest for those aged 65+ (41%).

The likelihood of installing solar panels among owner-occupiers was also related to self-reported personal income¹: from 49% of those earning less than £15,000, to 56% for those earning £15,000- £29,999, and 67-70% of those earning £30,000 or more.

Reasons for being likely and unlikely to install solar panels

Owner-occupiers who said they would 'probably' or 'definitely' install solar panels in the next few years (59% of all owner-occupiers in Spring 2024) were asked why they were considering this. Respondents were asked to select from a list of possible reasons.

In Spring 2024, as in the last two Spring waves, the primary driver for considering solar panels was to cut electricity bills (82%, down from 84% in Spring 2023), with 71% (down from 75%) saying it would provide a renewable source of electricity, and 52% (down from 55%) saying it would reduce dependence on the national grid. About one in three were motivated by selling excess electricity to the grid (36%, no change).

Owner-occupiers who said they would 'probably not' or 'definitely not' install solar panels in their home in the next few years (23% of all owner-occupiers in Spring 2024) were asked why this was the case, again selecting from a list.

In Spring 2024, the main barrier to installation of solar panels was thinking it would be too expensive (64%, down from 70% in Spring 2023). Other barriers included unsuitability for their home (23%, up from 20%), looking unsightly (19%, down from 25%), and concern about lack of sun in the UK (17%, up from 15%).

What might encourage people to install solar panels

People living in owner-occupied homes who did not already have solar panels² were asked which of a list of possible factors might encourage them to install solar panels (Figure 4.4).

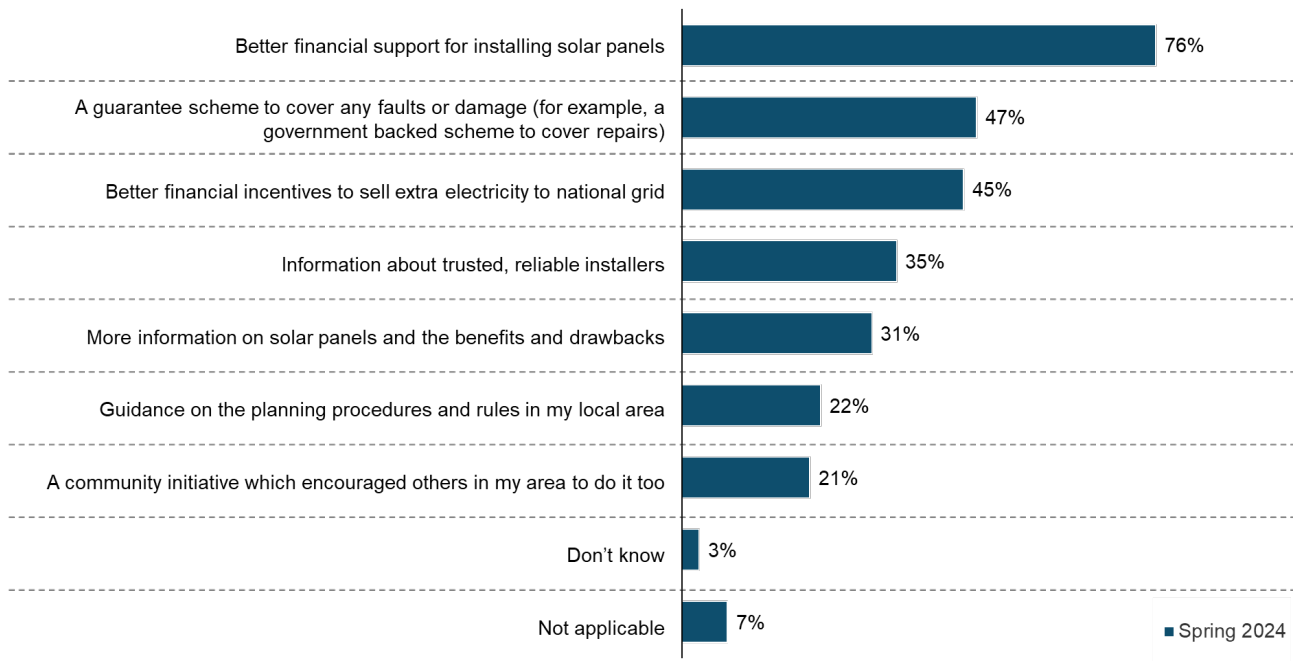
In Spring 2024³, better financial support (76%) remained the largest motivator for installation among those who did not currently have solar panels. Other encouragement factors selected by this group included a guarantee scheme to cover faults and damage (47%), better financial incentives to sell electricity to the grid (45%), information about trusted and reliable installers (35%), and more information about the product (31%).

¹ New questions were included in Spring 2024 that asked respondents to provide a self-reported assessment of income and financial hardship to help describe patterns in the data.

² Excluding people living in owner-occupied homes who said this was not their decision to make.

³ Question wording changed in Spring 2024 and therefore it is not possible to compare these results with previous waves.

Figure 4.4: What would encourage people to install solar panels (based on owner-occupiers responsible for decision who have not yet installed panels) Spring 2024



SOLARENC. Which, if any, of the following might make you personally* more likely to consider installing solar panels? Please select all that apply. (* word 'personally' added to question in 2024, and two new answer codes included in list).

Base: All wave owner-occupiers who have not already installed them excluding those who said it was not their decision to make – Spring 2023 (2,799), Spring 2024 (2,670)

Among those who did not already have solar panels, people living in urban areas were more likely (22%) when compared to people in rural areas (16%) to consider installing solar panels when encouraged by a community initiative. They were also more likely to be encouraged by information about trusted reliable installers (urban 36% compared with rural 29%).

Amongst the same subgroup, improved financial support was most likely to be an encouragement factor for younger people (this was selected by 83-87% of people aged 25-54 compared with 63% of those aged 65+) and people with higher incomes (81% of those reporting earning over £30,000 compared with 70% of those earning under £15,000).

Further findings on heat and energy in the home

In previous waves, questions were included on other topics relating to heat and energy in the home. The latest findings relating to these topics can be found as follows:

- Attitudes towards low carbon heating systems, see [Winter 2023 report on heat and energy in the home](#) - section on 'Low carbon heating systems'.
- Methods of heating and cooling in the home, see [Winter 2023 report on energy heat and energy in the home](#) - section on 'Heating and cooling in the home'.
- Level of attention paid to heating in the home, see [Winter 2023 report on energy heat and energy in the home](#) - section on 'Attitudes towards heating in the home'.
- Likelihood of replacing heating systems, and trust in advice on heating system installation, see [Winter 2023 report on energy heat and energy in the home](#) - section on 'Replacing heating systems'.
- Types of insulation in the home, see [Winter 2022 report on energy heat and energy in the home](#) - section on 'Insulation in the home'.



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